Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Plan for 2012-13

Government of
Saskatchewan

PLAN FOR 2012-13

Statement from the Minister

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Municipal Affair's Plan for 2012-13. The Government's Direction and Budget for 2012-13 are built around *Keeping the Saskatchewan Advantage*, supporting our sound economic growth so that the prosperity can be shared across the province.

Municipal Affairs is focused on supporting growth by maintaining strong government to government relationships, working with our sector partners to ensure municipalities are able to prosper and deliver the services required to support and grow healthy communities.

I accept responsibility for furthering Government's commitments while ensuring the Ministry is managed with integrity and professionalism, guided by our Government's corporate values and principles, in pursuit of our mission to facilitate the development of vibrant, safe, self-reliant and accountable municipalities capable of providing leadership and serve the interests of Saskatchewan communities.

The Ministry will report on progress made toward this plan, within the financial parameters provided, in the 2012-13 Annual Report.

The Honourable Darryl Hickie
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Response to Government Direction

Government has renewed its plan for 2012-13 to encourage and support the *Saskatchewan Advantage*. This plan reflects the Government's continued focus on economic growth, supporting the creation of new opportunities through strategic investments, ensuring that the prosperity is shared and our quality of life is enhanced. Government's key priorities and commitments have been supported in the context of a disciplined four-year fiscal plan and are presented in the *Government Direction for 2012-13*.

Government's Vision

"... a strong and growing Saskatchewan, the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Improving our quality of life	Making life more affordable	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Government's vision and four goals provide a directional framework for ministries, agencies and third parties to align with these priorities and to develop their plans to achieve greater success in the efficient delivery of government services.

All ministries and agencies will report on results achieved, or not yet achieved, in their 2012-13 annual reports. This honours Government's commitment to keep its promises and ensures greater transparency and accountability to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mission, Strategies and Actions

Mission Statement

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs facilitates development of vibrant, safe, self-reliant and accountable municipalities capable of providing leadership and serving the interests of Saskatchewan communities.

Strategy

Engage municipalities in increasing capacity for economic development

Key Actions

- Collaborate with other ministries and the municipal sector to identify barriers and options to improve economic outcomes, e.g. review of subdivision regulations, Municipal Sector Strategic Plan.
- Implement recommendations of the review of Saskatchewan Municipal Board processes related to municipal boundary alterations.
- Act on recommendations of the review related to tax loss compensation in municipal boundary alterations.
- Manage the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative to support the provincial growth agenda.

Strategy

Champion and support effective community planning

Key Actions

- Work with the municipal sector and other provincial ministries and agencies to explore methods and sources to encourage regional planning for land use, infrastructure investment and economic development.
- Share best practices arising from the Planning for Growth program, a collaborative initiative to enhance regional planning capacity and establish best practices to facilitate sustainable growth and development across the province.
- Provide guidance to municipalities identified as high growth areas regarding planning and development practices to expedite investment in housing, commercial and industrial development.
- Collaborate with the municipal sector to identify needs and approaches to improve municipal planning capacity.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon, City of Bridg

Strategy

Assist municipalities in addressing infrastructure needs to support growth

Key Actions

- Collaborate with provinces/territories and the federal government to develop a long term infrastructure plan and funding program.
- Continue working with the municipal sector to review and design program options for a long-term, predictable and sustainable capital infrastructure program specific to Saskatchewan.
- Facilitate orderly and efficient management of infrastructure programs to enable effective investments primarily for water, wastewater, solid waste, recreation, and local roads.
- Encourage municipalities to use servicing agreements and development levies to fund and achieve sustainable infrastructure investment.
- Engage municipalities in increasing their capacity to manage municipal infrastructure:
  - continue to work with municipal partners to develop training opportunities, resources and best practices to improve asset management and long-term financial planning; and,
  - continue research with rural municipalities to track and report on road maintenance costs and loss of road life related to heavy hauls and road maintenance agreements.

Strategy

Enable municipalities to achieve vibrant, safe, healthy communities

Key Actions

- Maintain our Government's commitment to provide unconditional funding to the sector through the Municipal Revenue Sharing program in an amount equal to one full point of the Provincial Sales Tax, based on Public Accounts.
- Complete our Government's commitment to review how municipal revenue sharing grants are allocated to the cities, urban, rural and northern funding pools.
- Encourage municipal policy and development decisions that promote community health and safety.
- Promote use of the Ministry's new self-assessment tool by municipal governments to improve their long-term sustainability.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Hans-Gerhard Pfaff, Downtown Regina

Strategy

Support strategic and innovative improvements in the governance and administrative capacity of Saskatchewan's municipal sector

Key Actions

- Identify, evaluate and initiate strategic and innovative improvements to Saskatchewan's local government system:
  - work with municipalities to ensure the smooth implementation of four- year terms of office and new voter ID requirements under *The Local Government Election Act*;
  - provide regional opportunities for municipal collaboration and sharing of limited resources to facilitate and service new growth through amendments to *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*. Proposed changes will provide greater flexibility for planning districts to establish regional plans;
  - undertake consultations and introduce amendments to *The Cities Act*, *The Municipalities Act*, and *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010*; and,
  - initiate additional training workshops and other capacity-building initiatives for northern municipal administrators as identified in the Northern Municipal Trust Account Needs Assessment.
- Through training, workshops, pilot projects and other initiatives, continue to work with the municipal sector to enhance professional and administrative capacity.
- Continue to strengthen relationships with municipal partners through the Municipal Forum and other venues for dialogue.
- Work with the Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association to update its professional legislation and regulations, and to ensure Government's interjurisdictional commitments respecting labour mobility are met.
- Act on recommendations of the review of the Saskatchewan Municipal Board to strengthen its ability to carry out its responsibilities relating to local governments.

Strategy

Encourage and facilitate municipal, First Nations, and Métis relationships

Key Actions

- Inform municipalities of their duty to consult through municipal bylaw reviews, workshops and informational sessions.
- Ensure duty to consult obligations are met when developing policy and legislation or approving bylaws and subdivisions.
- Strengthen relationships between municipalities and First Nations and Métis people by facilitating discussions to enhance shared services and stimulate economic development.

Photo Credit: Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, photo by Paul Austring, Buffalo Narro

Strategy

Increase municipal financial and operational transparency and accountability

Key Actions

- Increase the overall knowledge of financial reporting, compliance requirements, and accountability at the municipal level through workshops, technical guidance and sharing of best practices.
- Provide advice and counsel to support municipal compliance with Public Sector Accounting Board requirements, legislative requirements and funding agreements.
- Communicate to Saskatchewan people Government's initiatives and investments in municipalities. Traditional and emerging communications channels will be used to highlight provincial investment in municipal infrastructure projects, capacity building endeavours like the Municipal Government Sustainability Self Assessment Tool, and emphasis on best practices including initiatives related to municipal asset management.
- Educate and raise awareness of roles and responsibilities of municipal elected officials.
- Complete development of legislative amendments to enable municipalities to designate special service areas as a means to finance and provide extra services to particular parts of municipalities.
- Project assessment and property tax shifts associated with the 2013 revaluation, develop tax policy options, undertake consultations with stakeholders, provide tax policy recommendations to government and implement decisions.
- Develop options and make recommendations to government to set education property tax mill rates.

Strategy

Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Ministry's programs and services

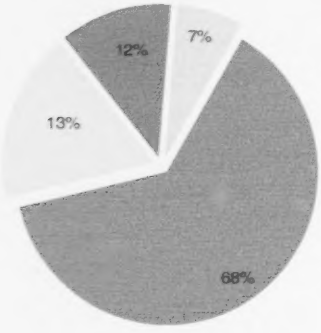
Key Actions

- Utilize Lean value-stream mapping events and other tools to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Ministry processes.
- Develop internal Ministry Lean capacity to assist improvement efforts and ensure a long-term Lean culture is fully developed and sustained.
- Develop an updated automated municipal financial information reporting system in consultation with stakeholders.
- Implement results from the review of the management of municipal tax exemptions, abatements, discounts, and penalties in relation to education property tax.
- Provide municipal government access to the Ministry's Property Assessment and Taxation Mapping and Analysis Program, a tool to examine tax shifts from local tax tools and municipal boundary alterations.
- Implement an online payment system for the Subdivision On-Line Applications.
- Expand the data and information available to the Ministry, other ministries and municipalities through the Municipal Information Dataportal.

Performance Measures

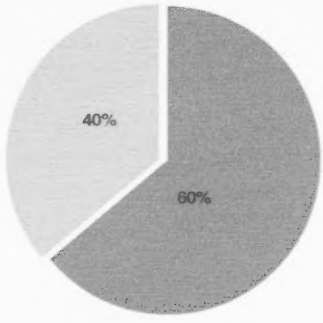
Measure

Percentage of the population living in municipalities with or without Official Community Plans



- Urban municipalities with Plans (68%)
- Urban municipalities without Plans (13%)
- Rural municipalities with Plans (12%)
- Rural municipalities without Plans (7%)

Percentage of municipalities with or without Official Community Plans



- Municipalities without Plans (60%)
- Municipalities with Plans (40%)

Source: Municipal Affairs - Community Planning

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Devona Hill Photography, Rolling Pines Golf and Country Res

Measure Description

The Planning and Development Act, 2007 provides municipalities the authority to adopt an Official Community Plan (OCP). The OCPs set out policies to govern land use and development, outline the municipality's economic growth strategies, encourage environmental stewardship, plan sustainable infrastructure, support recreational opportunities and address community interests. Without OCPs municipal councils do not have the policies and supporting legal authority to lead the municipality's development agenda.

As the first graph displays, the majority of Saskatchewan's population lives in communities that have adopted OCPs (80% total as of March 2012). However, as displayed in the second measure, many municipalities are still without OCPs. Without an OCP, municipalities have not established a plan for growth and community sustainability or the authority to facilitate new development opportunities to achieve cost effective and efficient services for community residents and new land development. Economic growth in Saskatchewan has furthered the need for capable municipalities to implement OCPs in order to respond to increasing demands for residential and commercial lots, expanded infrastructure, and servicing to support community expectations and needs.

OCPs set out municipal policies of the community to create certainty and consistency in the development of the community for residents and business community. These policies include the community's direction for current and future economic development, housing availability, recreational services, provision of public works, management of environmentally sensitive lands and source water protection. These policies also reduce many risks or costs associated with development by setting out direction for the efficient use of infrastructure and the avoidance of natural hazards such as flooding or slope instability.

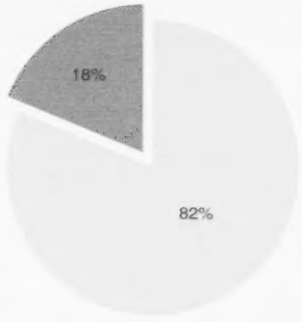
Providing support to municipalities in the facilitation of development and to help reduce potential risks, the Ministry:

- clarifies and coordinates provincial priorities for land use and development through the Statements of Provincial Interest;
- promotes the development of OCPs and zoning bylaws including coordination with municipal infrastructure funding projects;
- reviews and approves municipal planning and zoning bylaws to ensure consistency with legislation and provincial interests;
- forges links with other ministries to incorporate municipal land use planning objectives into their initiatives;
- facilitates the development of local capacity through education and training;
- develops consultation processes; and,
- fosters relationships with First Nations and Métis communities.

Photo Credit: Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, photo by Paul Austring, Blue Sky over Duck Mountain

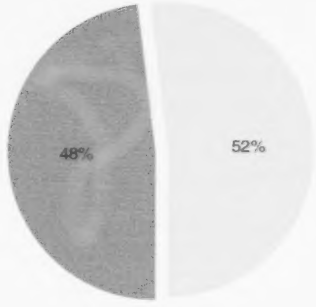
Measure

Percentage of population covered by *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act* (UBAS) building bylaws



- Population covered by UBAS building bylaws (82%)
- Population not covered by UBAS building bylaws (18%)

Percentage of municipalities with a building bylaw pursuant to UBAS



- Municipalities with a UBAS building bylaw (52%)
- Municipalities without a UBAS building bylaw (48%)

Source: Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing - Building Standards

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon, Broadway Bri

Measure Description

Municipal Affairs undertakes significant inter-ministry and agency coordination to facilitate the incorporation of Government priorities and interests within local government. This coordination includes:

- safeguarding public health and safety;
- ensuring the integrity of public infrastructure;
- preserving natural, cultural and archaeological resources;
- protecting the environment, including water; and,
- encouraging the sustainable development of communities.

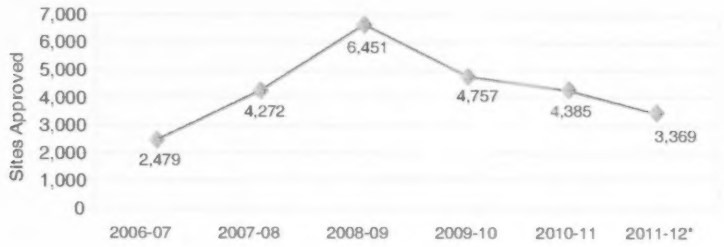
This measure demonstrates municipal leadership in providing public safety through the adoption of building bylaws pursuant to *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act* (UBAS) and enforcement of building standards that promote safe construction of buildings. As of March 1, 2012, 410 (52%) municipalities had UBAS approved building bylaws in place, while 376 of 786 (48%) municipalities were without a UBAS building bylaw pursuant to the Act. Municipalities with building bylaws in place represent 82% of the province's population (based on the 2011 Census), not including reserve populations. Inspections on reserves where the National Building Code is utilized are conducted by First Nations Building Officials.

Ongoing and developing efforts and initiatives by the Ministry, as well as interministry and agency co-ordination, will increase the implementation of UBAS building bylaws by municipalities. Interjurisdictional planning provides a means of building municipal planning capacity and developing Official Community Plans and building bylaws. The Ministry is working with municipalities to enhance interjurisdictional opportunities through the Municipal Capacity Development Program and assisting communities interested in working together through district planning initiatives.

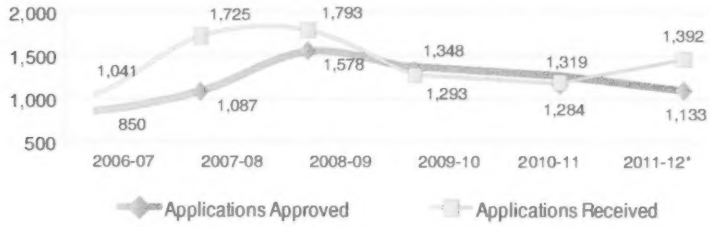
Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Jones Peak, near Eastend

Measure

Number of sites approved through subdivision approval process



Number of subdivision applications received and approved



Source: Municipal Affairs - Community Planning

** Estimates as of March 2012. Please note that the figures reported above may fluctuate slightly between reporting periods due to minor corrections in the database for decisions.*

Photo Credit: Enterprise Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Mosaic Belle Plaine s

Measure Description

The subdivision of land is a key step for investment in economic growth as it is one of the first steps in the development process. The Integrated Subdivision Approval Program facilitates the subdivision of land to ensure site suitability and appropriate servicing of the intended residential, commercial and industrial development. Using integrated community development approaches, the Ministry reviews applications to subdivide land to ensure compliance with federal, provincial and municipal regulations and provide direction and assistance to municipalities and developers.

Each proposed subdivision is reviewed for acceptability with municipal and provincial planning requirements such as flooding, slope stability, conflicting land uses, access, local zoning standards, heritage potential, environmental considerations and infrastructure servicing requirements. The integrated process creates consistency and certainty for business investment and overall development of the municipality by addressing the subdivision needs for transportation, utility, health, education and recreation services. The overall process results in the improvement of economic, social, and environmental conditions in a community.

In 2011-12, Municipal Affairs is projected to receive 1,392 subdivision applications and approve 1,133 applications, resulting in the creation of 3,369 sites. Projections for 2012-13 indicate achieving similar levels as development activity levels off so that current marketable lots are sold for development. The elevated trend for lot development in the past five years represents significant investment in land and property within the province and places demands for new infrastructure to service the sites created.

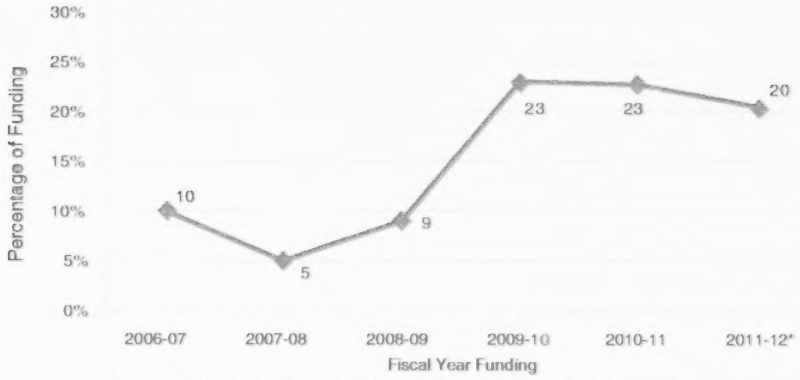
In order to advance provincial priorities for land development Municipal Affairs has developed several initiatives that will continue to assist in expediting the review and approval of subdivisions:

- through utilization of Lean methodology, several improvements for the subdivision review and approval process were identified and implemented in 2010. These initiatives, and further improvements developed through Lean, will continue to be implemented and monitored in 2012-13 as the Ministry strives to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of this important process; and,
- additionally, the implementation of the Subdivision On-Line Application, an electronic method for processing applications, has improved the speed and efficiency of subdivision application reviews and decisions.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Dock Jumpers

Measure

Regional water, wastewater and solid waste infrastructure projects



Source: Municipal Affairs – Grants Administration and Financial Management
**Estimated*

Measure Description

This measure is significant to the Ministry and government as regional solutions often provide an effective and efficient solution to local issues surrounding limited financial resources, increasing municipal infrastructure deficits and environmental/health disaster risk. This measure tracks the amount of federal/provincial program funding that is provided to communities with populations fewer than 100,000 for regional water, wastewater and solid waste infrastructure as a percentage of total funding provided under those categories.

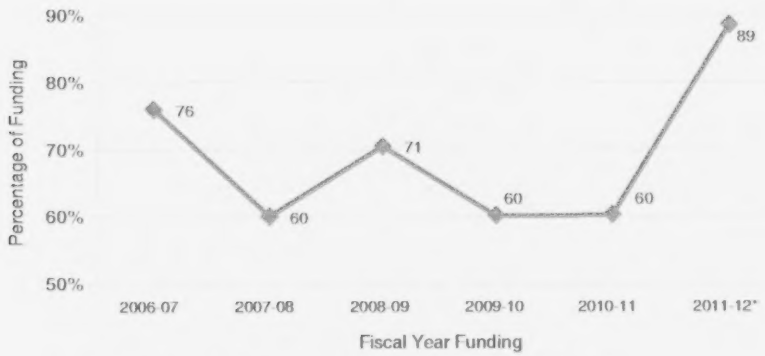
Significant funding in 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 has been committed to regional infrastructure. Clean water is essential for a high quality of life in our province. In order to provide necessary funding to achieve this, the Government of Saskatchewan will continue to provide funding for several important regional projects under the Building Canada Fund – Communities Component in 2011-12.

Until new federal/provincial funding programs become available, this measurement continues to track funding spent on previously approved programs only. As a result, a decreasing trend may be observed (as there was in 2011-12) that is not necessarily reflective of a decrease in ongoing funding, but rather of an increase in the successful completion of previously approved regional projects.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Fishing on Jan La

Measure

Public environmental and safety projects



Source: Municipal Affairs – Grants Administration and Financial Management
**Estimated*

Measure Description

Government investments in health and safety related infrastructure projects are essential to promote quality of life for Saskatchewan residents and mitigate environmental/health risks. This measure tracks the proportion of federal/provincial cost-shared program funding provided for water, wastewater, and solid waste projects as a percentage of total funding provided.

Total federal/provincial funding has significantly increased in the past several years. A significant portion of total funding was cash-flowed to public safety projects in 2010-11. In 2011-12, the percentage of funding for public safety projects will be the highest level in seven years. This high percentage in 2011-12 is the result of a focus on public safety projects under the Building Canada Fund – Communities Component and the completion of many of the sport/culture/recreation/local roadway projects in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

Until more funding programs are generated, this measurement will be primarily reflective of spending on previously approved multi-year environmental and safety projects, rather than reflecting the number of newly approved projects. As more and more projects come to completion, the numbers may become skewed by those that take longer to complete and do not fall within this category. These skewed numbers may not be reflective of the government's actual investment into public environment and safety projects.

Financial Summary

2012-13 Estimates	(In thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	4,586
Municipal Financial Assistance	316,977
Federal Municipal Assistance	56,055
Municipal Relations	7,758
Saskatchewan Municipal Board	1,407
Total Appropriation	**386,783**
Capital Asset Acquisitions	
Capital Asset Amortization	
Total Expense	**386,783**
FTE Staff Complement	**127.8**

For more information, see the Budget Estimates at: http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2012-13

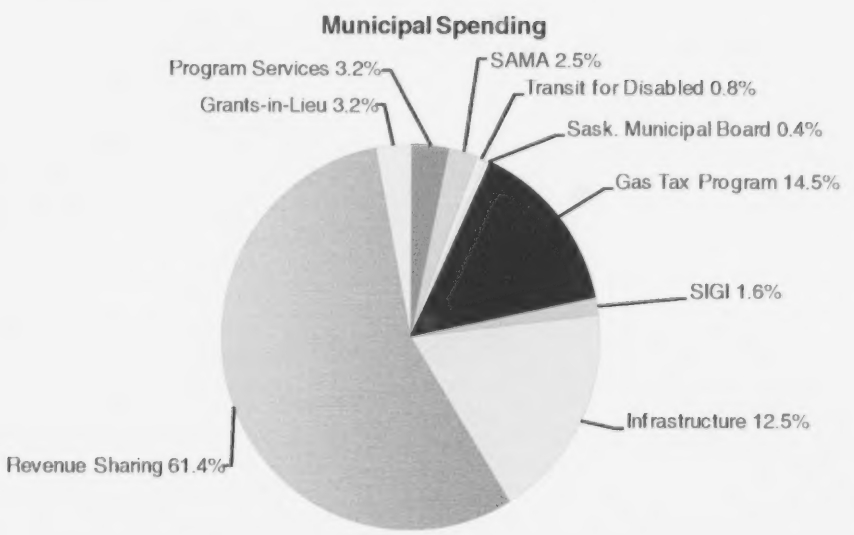


Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, David Buckley, Canoeing, MacFarlane Riv

Highlights

The following are key announcements being made in the 2012-13 Budget:

- Revenue Sharing – Municipal revenue sharing funding rises to a record level of $237.4 million. This represents a $20.6 million increase from 2011-12, consisting of the following:
  - $151.9 million to urban municipalities;
  - $68.9 million to rural municipalities; and,
  - $16.6 million to northern municipalities.
- Infrastructure – $48.4 million is provided for federal-provincial-municipal infrastructure programs. A further $56.1 million in federal flow-through funding for the Gas Tax Program is also provided.

For More Information

Please visit the Ministry's website at www.municipal.gov.sk.ca for more information on the Ministry's programs and services. For additional information about Municipal Affairs, or to provide feedback about our 2012-13 Plan or performance results, please contact us at (306) 798-6093.

Front Page Photo Credits

Canola and flax fields	*Biking, Narrow Hills Provincial Park*	*Motherwell Homestead National Historic Site of Canada*	*Saskatchewan Legislative Building*
Photographer, Charles Melnick	*Greg Huszar Photographry*	*Greg Huszar Photographry*	*Greg Huszar Photographry*